

MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT

EXPAND CAPACITY FOR SINGLE ADULT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS SEEKING SHELTER

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The New York State Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NYSCADV) urges the New York State Legislature to pass this legislation, known as S.A.F.E (Securing Access to Fair and Equal) Shelter Act, which would authorize domestic violence shelters to be reimbursed for any payment differential for housing a single individual in a room intended for double occupancy.

Under the current reimbursement system, domestic violence shelters are reimbursed on a per person per night basis. This antiquated system fails to address the growing number of single adult victims of domestic violence fleeing abusive situations.

Domestic violence shelters were originally constructed to provide services and shelter for fleeing families (e.g., one adult and one or more children.) As such, shelter units are typically intended to house more than one occupant. More recently, the number of single adult victims of domestic violence seeking temporary housing has increased, creating a new financial dilemma for domestic violence shelter operators -- house a single adult in a double occupancy room and lose revenue or prioritize filling beds to obtain full reimbursement.

Based on the maximum 180-day length of stay for survivors in shelter, a DV program stands to lose nearly \$21,000 for just one double-bed unit used to temporarily house a single adult. This loss would be catastrophic for even the most financially sound domestic violence program. However, failing to provide shelter to a single individual could increase the likelihood the victim will return to the abusive situation.

This inequitable reimbursement process leads to significant undue burden for single survivors seeking shelter, particularly those in historically excluded communities, including LGBTQIA+ survivors, older adult survivors, and survivors with pets.

This bill would provide an equitable fix for survivors and DV programs by:

- Requiring the State to reimburse DV shelters for double occupancy when a room configured for two individuals is used to house a single individual;
- Eliminating the financial incentive shelters have for sheltering families rather than individuals; and
- Expanding shelter access to already-marginalized communities, such as LGBTQ+ and older survivors.

NYSCADV urges the Legislature to expand capacity for single adult domestic violence victims seeking shelter without causing catastrophic financial loss for DV programs.

ABOUT NYSCADV:

Established in 1978, NYSCADV is designated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services as the information clearinghouse, primary point of contact, and resource center on domestic violence for the State of New York. NYSCADV is responsible for supporting the development of policies, protocol, and procedures to enhance domestic violence intervention and prevention and also provides education and technical assistance to the network of primary-purpose domestic violence service providers statewide.

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